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ABSTRACT

The Center for Excellence in College Teaching of the Consortium of East Jersey serves 1,000 faculty distributed among the four member institutions: Kean College of New Jersey, Seton Hall University, Union College, and Union County Technical Institute. The emphasis of the Center has been the analysis and improvement of instruction using the process developed at the Clinic to Improve University Teaching at the University of Massachusetts. The demands of the Center have exceeded its capabilities. Therefore, a program was developed in which faculty are trained to become faculty facilitators. During the training period the participants are involved in analyzing their own teaching as well as developing their skills as consultants and instructional development specialists, and they become an extension of the Center's staff. The program is succeeding in strengthening the Center's resources by developing inhouse capabilities, and is creating a vehicle for the faculty of the different institutions to meet, share ideas, and develop skills in faculty development. (Author/MSE)

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A CONSORTIUM APPROACH TO FACULTY DEVELOPMENT: USE OF FACULTY FACILITATORS TO ENHANCE TEACHING PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

The Center for Excellence in College Teaching of the Consortium of East Jersey serves 1,000 faculty distributed among the four member institutions. The emphasis of the Center has been the analysis and improvement of instruction using the process developed at the Clinic to Improve University Teaching at the University of Massachusetts. The demands of the Center have exceeded its capabilities. Therefore, we developed a program in which faculty are trained to become faculty facilitators. During the training period, the participants are involved in analyzing their own teaching as well as developing their skills as consultants and as instructional development specialists. By the end of the training, these faculty facilitators become an extension of the Center's staff. Through their efforts with colleagues they effect improvements in teaching and learning and foster an environment in which effective teaching and efforts to improve teaching are frequently discussed and highly valued. This program is succeeding in strengthening the Center's resources by developing in-house capabilities and is creating a vehicle for the faculty of the different institutions to meet together, share ideas and develop skills in faculty development.

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A CONSORTIUM APPROACH TO FACULTY DEVELOPMENT: USE OF FACULTY FACILITATORS TO ENHANCE TEACHING PERFORMANCE

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The very conditions which have led to the establishment of faculty development programs at other institutions exist in the four member institutions of the Consortium of East Jersey: declining student enrollments in liberal arts and education programs, increase in the attrition level, decrease in faculty mobility, reduced funding, and demands for accountability. Most important, however, is the dramatic change in the nature of the student body and therefore in the educational programs offered.

This change in the colleges' curriculum and student body has posed many challenges and difficulties for our faculty. Faculty cannot be expected to adapt to new conditions, structures, methodologies and learners without substantial support. The impact of the faculty's unmet needs ultimately falls hardest on the student who finds his/her learning opportunities reduced.

The State of New Jersey has been cognizant of the importance of faculty development and has legislated in its favor. New Jersey state law, under Chapter 163 of the Laws of 1973 ("A-328") states: "The president and board of trustees of each college, in consultation with the recognized majority representative organization, shall establish a formal program for the career development of members of the teaching staff and other members of the professional staff who are members of the bargaining unit" ... One year later, the Consortium of East Jersey created its faculty development program - The Center for Excellence in College Teaching, one of six programs designed to meet common needs of the different

institutions.

The Consortium of East Jersey (CEJ) was established in 1972 as a voluntary cooperative effort by Kean College of New Jersey (a state multi-purpose institution), Seton Hall University (a private institution), Union College (a two year transfer community college), and Union County Technical Institute (a vocational-technical two year college). The Consortium programs include: a released time management training internship for faculty members and junior administrators, a veterans education program, faculty exchange, library exchange system, student cross registration, and the Center for Excellence in College Teaching (CECT).

The Center's staff (a Director, and a secretary) serves 1,000 faculty. CECT enjoys the full support of the member institutions but is a separate entity, thus it can effectively operate as an agent of change. The diversity of the institutions and their geographic proximity permit effective use of resources (faculty, equipment and facilities), draws upon their strengths to enhance the possibilities of intellectual crossbreeding and realizes cost effectiveness. The ultimate purpose of the Center's efforts is improved teaching and learning in the member institutions. Our model for change is an instructional/faculty development model. Its primary assumption is that the surest way to improve instruction is to systematize course design and to strengthen and extend the teaching skills and strategies of faculty. Therefore, we have offered faculty a variety of services which have focused directly on the teaching/learning interaction. The emphasis of the Center has been the analysis and improvement of instruction, using the

process developed at the Clinic to Improve University Teaching at the University of Massachusetts. At the same time, workshops for small groups of faculty members have been offered. In this model the arena for consulting and training with the client population is smaller than that used in other models of change, i.e. the organizational development model.

The Center's activities, as useful and successful as they have been, were by necessity offered on a "first come, first served" basis. Data collected revealed that individuals who participated in the program benefitted from it as did their students. But the demands on the Center exceeded its capabilities, and the Center, in its original state, could not have a long range impact on the instructional level of the member institutions. It became clear that the future of faculty development could not depend solely on a center's staff, which is limited in capability under the best of circumstances. Specifically, the problem was: How could we increase the probabilities so that our efforts will have a long range impact; that increased teaching and learning will be maintained in the long run?

Our solution to the problem: The use of faculty facilitators to enhance teaching performance. This solution rests on the assumption that the key to a long range impact of professional development efforts, is to get a "critical mass" of faculty involved in teaching improvement.

Faculty, in the final analysis, define, organize, monitor and evaluate learning. Unless they make a commitment in sufficient numbers to affect the learning experiences of most students, the

goal of improving the effectiveness of the teaching/learning process in a significant way remains a dream. Therefore, we developed a program in which interested faculty are trained to become faculty facilitators. These are faculty members who are trained to be teaching consultants to their colleagues, through the use of the Teaching Consultation Process (an adaptation of the Clinic Process of the Clinic to Improve University Teaching, University of Massachusetts).

This process involves a systematic, but individualized, program which includes three major stages: (1) assessment; (2) improvement strategies; and, (3) final review.

During the assessment stage, comprehensive information about the instructor's teaching is collected through an interview with the instructor, a classroom observation, a videotape, and a student questionnaire. This information is then reviewed by the instructor and the consultant in order to identify teaching strengths and areas for improvement, and to define improvement goals. During the second stage, instructors who elect to continue working in this collaborative arrangement, work with the consultant to find techniques and strategies which will enable them to accomplish their improvement goals. While activities during this stage vary widely, the consultant can help instructors find ways to capitalize on their teaching strengths, examine relevant research on teaching and learning, plan class activities which incorporate principles of learning, experiment with various classroom techniques and skills, and obtain continuous feedback about teaching/learning activities. During the final review stage, the consultant helps the instructor

to, once again, collect information about the isntructor's teaching in order to assess progress toward improvement goals and to update their analysis of the instructor's teaching strengths and areas for improvement.

The program to train faculty facilitators consists of three components:

(1) Training Through Self Exploration - By the end of the training, the participants have:

a) Examined their own teaching efforts with respect to their perceived change, student evaluation and student achievement.

b) Conducted an assessment of the objectives, methods, and style characteristics involved in their teaching.

c) Received feedback relevant to their teaching from such mechanisms as videotapings, audiotapes, student questionnaires.

d) Participated in examinations of innovative teaching methods.

e) Participated in activities relevant to test construction, grading, media resources available, and their use.

(2) Training in Consultation Skills - By the end of the training, the participants have developed the expertise of:

a) Collaborative problem solving

b) Diagnosis of focal issues

c) Feedback of data

d) Exploration of alternatives

e) Planning for change

f) Closure and follow-up

(3) Training in Instructional Development - By the end of the training, the participants are able to provide consultation to colleagues in areas of:

a) Teaching styles and learning styles

b) Evaluation of teaching

c) Curriculum development

d) Testing and grading - Evaluation of students

e) Innovative teaching methods

The training of a viable group of Faculty Facilitators is accomplished in three phases. These phases are Recruiting, Orientation-Initial Training and Practicum. Phasing the development in this manner provides two distinct advantages. First, the initial commitment of the participants is minimal providing them with the opportunity to assess their real interest in the Faculty Facilitator Program. Second, the time spent by those who elect not to continue is not wasted since the experience gained in Initial Training should enhance their own teaching skills and techniques. Our experience has been that 85% of the participants in Initial Training go on to the next phase. 54% complete the full program, though not all of those perform as Faculty Facilitators. A more detailed description of the three phases follows:

(1) Recruiting - This program, like all other Center activities, is advertised in our newsletter which is distributed to all faculty members. It includes an explanation of the concept, the purpose and the desired outcomes of the program. The recruiting effort is exerted without the involvement of the administrations of the

member institutions. Participation in this program, as well as in all the Center's activities, is voluntary.

(2) Orientation and Initial Training - Toward the end of a semester, a two day workshop is conducted by the Director of the Center during which the participants are introduced to the Teaching Consultation Process. The participants go through the process via a simulated case study. Role playing and discussion groups (both small and large) are the primary methods used. Initial training is provided on the techniques of classroom observation, interviewing and interaction analysis.

At the completion of this phase, participants have reasonable means of assessing their interest in and level of enthusiasm for faculty development. At this point the participants are asked to decide whether or not they want to continue the program. It is made clear that this will entail work throughout the next semester. Shortly after the conclusion of the workshop, an organizational meeting is scheduled to plan the final phase.

(3) Practicum - This phase emphasizes the clinical process. Each participant goes through the Teaching Consultation Process twice; once as a client and once as a consultant. Each is also a participant in group learning. As a client, the participant is subject to a full analysis of his teaching, with the help of a consultant chosen from the group. We believe that this is a mandatory prerequisite to become a faculty facilitator.

Simultaneously, the participant acts as a consultant to another member of the group. This structure was intentionally designed to provide the participants with an opportunity to engage

in two different relationships as well as to assume two different roles. This preserves and intensifies the realistic and unique relationship between client and consultant. During client-consultant activities, the Director observes and consults with the participants as work progresses.

Group activities are conducted by the Director. These are used to sharpen the consultant skills of the participants, to expand their knowledge of teaching skills and strategies, and to discuss their mutual concerns and problems.

By the end of the training, these faculty facilitators become an extension of the Center's staff. Some of those who successfully complete the program are granted released time to work as faculty facilitators. Through their efforts with colleagues they effect improvements in teaching and learning and foster an environment in which effective teaching and efforts to improve teaching are frequently discussed and highly valued. This program is succeeding in strengthening the Center's resources by developing in-house capabilities and is creating a vehicle for the faculty of the different institutions to meet together, share ideas and develop skills in faculty development.